# Facebook Policy Change May Detrimentally Affect Online Search Result Rankings

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On June 9, 2009, Facebook announced that it will allow its users to select personalized usernames for Facebook profiles and certain fan pages beginning on Friday, June 12, 2009, at 11:01 pm CDT.

Among other things, Facebook will incorporate the username into the URL of the user's page, which will considerably elevate the search results ranking of the user's page when the username is searched within Facebook or externally (e.g., on Google). Correspondingly, another user's selection of, e.g., "YOUR BRAND NAME" as a username may detrimentally affect your search results ranking (especially within Facebook).

## Protect Your Trademark

To curtail abuse, Facebook suggests that registered trademark holders complete the online form at the URL below. Facebook hopes to prevent registered trademarks from improperly being selected as usernames by third parties:

http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=username_rights

We see no downside to completing the no-cost form for "YOUR BRAND NAME" and each of your other registered trademarks of interest (in order of importance, since there appears to be a limit), and strongly suggest that you do so prior to the deadline.

Moreover, if your corporation has a Facebook fan page of more than 1,000 fans as of May 31, 2009, this page qualifies for a personalized username. Although it is unclear whether anyone, will be able to select the personalized usernames they request on Friday evening (assuming they completed the form), we still suggest having the administrator of the fan page attempt to do so.

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